

4

LETTER

FROM ——— TO MR. ———

CONTAINING AN

“EXTRACT” AND OTHER MATTERS,

BESIDES A “P. S.”

MY DEAR SIR:

In reply to your note, requesting me to relieve your mind, by stating my opinion concerning the recent interference of the Reverend Rector of St. John's Church, Fayetteville, through the columns of a political newspaper,\* in the concerns of another parish, the delicacy and propriety of which interference, in regard to its time, spirit and manner, as well as in others respects, you say have been by many persons called in question; permit me to send you an extract, of which it is only necessary to say, that though not taken from Dr. Isaac Barrow, yet it contains much wholesome and true doctrine, which manifestly appears from this, that not only doth it agree in all things with the said Reverend Rector, but likewise it fully expresseth the opinion of

Yours truly,

Sept. 13, 1840.

EXTRACT.

“Now, true it is, my son, some of the lay people do say and contend that, in respect of those things which concern not “the foundations of faith or practice of holiness,” and in respect of which

\* See the publication referred to, post page 7.

neither the Holy Gospel, nor the church, (by any decree or canon of any provincial synod, or general council,) hath defined or determined any thing, it is right to allow to all christian men some reasonable latitude of conduct and diversity of judgment; seeing that, both God and the church having in regard thereto left the minds of men free to be determined by their own opinion and conscience, it standeth not with reason, (say they) that any parish priest or clerk in orders should tie up and restrain therein the judgment and conduct of his parishioners, by the bands of his own wishes or opinions; but on the contrary, (some of these same laymen do boldly insist) that such rigour in regard of these indifferent things, is not only an infringement upon their christian liberty, (as they do mistakenly call it,) but is impolitic withal, and tendeth unwisely and unsafely to narrow the door of the church, (which is the way to life) by such unauthorized obstructions therein placed: And thereupon these same laymen do pretend to allege St. Paul's example and doctrine, as favourable to what they (of their vain conceit) do prate in this matter; because that the said apostle, Paul, in all indifferent things did use such compliance and courtesy towards the errors, and mistakes, and diversities of opinion of all, whether clerks or laymen, that he might well say, in reference thereto, that he became all things to all men, for the sake thereby of gaining some; and even in matters of more and greater concernment, did choose rather to reason with, and gently and lovingly persuade, than use his apostolical weight and authority—recommending rather than imposing—and never *requiring* others to yield to him, except upon the authority of God's will to him revealed, or upon conviction of mind brought to pass by reasons and persuasions lovingly urged as is above said.

“ But all this is most ignorantly or obstinately alleged by the said laymen, and sheweth that the holy doctrine, in the hands of sensual and undiscerning men, is as much out of place as is a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, as the wise son of David doth express it. For the true doctrine is clean contrary to what they affirm, and the apostle's example tendeth to our side, and not to theirs—which will plainly and sufficiently appear by these following considerations: And first, christian religion doth plainly require, (as the same apostle teacheth, in his first epistle to the church at Corinth,) that there be no divisions amongst christian men, but that they be all perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment; and this must, in our day, of necessity be understood of the foresaid mat-



ters of indifference, forasmuch as those greater things which do concern the foundations of faith or practise of holiness, have been either so plainly laid down in Holy Scripture, or so well settled and declared from Holy Scripture, by catholic doctors and synods, against unreasonable men, which in ancient times did maliciously contend against the same, that the truth thereof is not now likely, by any, to be drawn in question. Wherefore the said unity and perfect agreement being plainly required in some things, it remaineth of necessity that it be enforced in things which be not determined by the Gospel, nor defined or required by the church, that is to say, in those very same indifferent things which pertain not to the substance of faith or righteousness. But unity and agreement herein (howsoever necessary they be) can only be produced either by authority to give a rule thereupon, or by reasons to shew how each man's own conscience and judgment should direct him to one common conclusion therein. Now, seeing that the apostle Paul had in himself as well the latter as the former of these two instruments for procuring unity and concord, *he* might well forego his apostolical authority, and instead thereof, apply himself with weighty motives and sound logick, to convince the minds and sway the consciences of his hearers in those cases in the which he thought it needful to bring them unto unity and agreement. But, in both these particulars, and especially in the latter, the said apostle doth manifestly differ from our pastors at this day, at the least, from those wise and learned clerks who most bestow their godly diligence upon the enforcement of unity in those indifferent matters, in the which it seemeth to them that no diversity should be allowed, but contrarywise, that it is very needful to tie up by the laws of their own opinions, what (there being no determination binding thereupon in Scripture, or the definitions or canons of the church) shall else be left free and unconcluded at all. Wherefore it doth behove us constantly to maintain our authority in these matters, asserting with all confidence that when *our* doctrine is in any point challenged, and especially if it be opposed by plausible discourse, our office is thereby disparaged, our persons degraded, our ministry obstructed, and the peace and order of the church infringed: by which weighty and well sounding words, let this pernicious spirit of evil, which seeketh after reasons, be rebuked and put to silence, and the laity (as is most just and proper) reduced to wholesome and entire submission. For, consider, I pray thee, that if the lay people shall be directly encouraged, or by any indi-

rection allowed, to challenge in these matters of indifference, the opinion of their pastors or spiritual guides, and shall not reverently submit thereto, unless first some good reason be alleged for the same, great perplexity will ensue unto some of the said reverend guides and pastors, and much injury be done to the church thereby, every man following in respect of those things which be indifferent, the light (which in laymen is but darkness) of his own blinded judgment, and thus unity therein be lost and destroyed.

“And whereas it is alleged by them of the contrary part, that it signifieth not whether all christian people be agreed in these things, for that they are but indifferent in themselves, and, being left unsettled by holy scripture and the fathers of the olden time, as well as by the Catholic Church of our day, men may, without just offence, differ therein; yet this is either ignorantly or of malice alleged, for (as we have already shewn above) those be the very chiefest things, wherein especially unity and perfect agreement is required by the holy text, and not those greater things which do concern faith and holiness, in the which it were less culpable and highhanded to question the resolutions delivered by us.

“Besides which, my son, consider this, that without good logick nothing can be proved; and therewith one thing can as well be proved as another, as doubtless thou hast observed in me and likewise experienced in thyself. Wherefore, if the said doctrine shall be held good, (which they of the laity do desire and uphold,) it shall happen that inconsiderate people, when they shall see their pastors allege, and yet be unable to make good their allegations respecting these indifferent things, shall be thereby emboldened to question things most certain and necessary, when by the same pastors alleged, the certainty and necessity whereof the said pastors shall be unable, for the reason above said, (that is, for the want of good logick,) to shew forth and establish. Wherefore, the apostle's example (well understood) giveth no countenance to the doctrine of these men, but rather concludeth against them. And should the same doctrine be allowed in the church, and the laity be thereby encouraged to require of their pastors to allege some good reason for what they affirm, (the matter affirmed not being found in Holy Scripture, nor defined by the holy primitive fathers, nor declared by any canon of any synod ancient, constant or modern;) and for want of such reason shall refuse assent thereto—nay, shall even openly deny outward obedience to them therein; it shall fall out at last (and the day



thereof not distant) that a great laxity and most dangerous licentiousness shall appear manifest in the laity, so that they shall come to deem themselves bound to submit their faith and practice only to the Gospel and the decrees, definitions and canons of the church, as is above said—shall profanely presume to judge of things not thereby determined, by the use of their own reason, conscience and judgment; and so deny themselves to be in duty bound reverently to obey, each his own pastor, in all things in the which he may charitably condescend to direct and control him. And so, the alway-changing fashion of this world, in regard of apparel, and house-plenishing, and assemblies and other divertisements, shall be left to the control and direction of the profane imaginings, and the unsanctified vanities of the lay people; and there shall nothing remain to the reverend pastors but that which pertaineth to faith and morals, and ministereth to the eternal things of that world which changeth not, but continueth ever.

“Wherefore, my son, as to the question thou hast propounded unto me, that is to say, whether thou shouldest interpose thy opinion in regard to the affairs of the parish which bordereth upon thine, this is my answer and resolution: Albeit thy scruple savoureth of that humility which, in worldly eyes, seemeth so lovely in one of our order; and albeit such thy interference may, by ill disposed or ignorant laymen, be interpreted a meddling in other men’s matters, which is forbidden by the holy text, (the true meaning whereof is doubtless to prohibit the vain curiosity of laymen touching the grounds of faith and reasons of practice, which of right do belong only to their spiritual guides;) yet, my son, yield thou not to these considerations, lest thy amiable but carnal feelings mislead thee into neglect of duty.

“This matter concerneth the authority of the whole clergy, (that is, of all who do agree in the opinions hereinbefore set forth, which number, questionless, doth include all who are well enlightened in the true doctrine thereupon;) and, therefore, none can be said, when he giveth his judgment, though it be touching the vestry of another parish, to concern himself indiscreetly with the business of other men. Wherefore, my son, cry aloud and spare not; be instant in season, *out of season*—in place, *out of place*. Let those things which thou appearest to speak in the corner, be published forth from the house top. Warn, rebuke, denounce the profane men, who, when their pastor allegeth any rule not contained in Scripture,

nor declared by the church, nor appearing, to their carnal minds, to be just and proper, do incontinently demand the reasons thereof—yea, and do with wicked pertinacity insist thereupon, even when it plainly appeareth that such reasons are not to be had. If thou art faithful herein, thou shalt save some of thy brethren, (and peradventure thyself also) much perplexity and trouble of mind, who, being required to give reasons for certain opinions of theirs, and, failing to produce the same, may, afterwards, when desired by some inconsiderate person (and from the laity what consideration canst thou expect) to give reasons even for the things most certain and necessary, be found in like manner unable to exhibit the same.—Now, this must needs work grievous trouble to the said pastors, they being thereby most perversely required to render a reason (a commodity often most difficult to be found) instead of an opinion or command of their own, which be things in their very nature most easy to be obtained, and of which, therefore, they do make liberal distribution, each one giving, according to the holy text, “of that which he hath,” (as is most reasonable) and not of that which he hath not, which last, nothing would lead men to require but the extreme of perverseness, which abideth continually as a fit companion of their ignorance with these persons of the laity, “who are cursed (as the holy text saith) because they know not the law,” that is, know not that the law, which is the shell, is for them, to be given by their pastors; while the reason thereof (that is the ecclesiastical motive which they that be clerks only know) is reserved for the said pastors, to be kept like the kernel for their own spiritual edification and delight.”

P. S. You need not be too much surprised at any thing in this world. Some men are run away with by horses, and some by abilities, and some by the conceit thereof; in which latter predicament I should myself have been, but for a remarkable modesty of self estimation which hath ever reined in and controlled as with a curb, the restless boundings of vanity. Be pleased, therefore, lest this private and confidential letter (which is intended for your own edification only) should become public, forthwith to print the same in the Raleigh Star, or in a handbill, as you think will be most *private and secure against publicity*.

To Mr. ————.



PUBLICATION REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING  
LETTER.

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FROM THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER.

*Dear Sir:*—In reply to your note requesting me to state my opinion on the character and tendency of a recent paper issued by the vestry of Christ Church, Raleigh, I send you an extract from Dr. Isaac Barrow, which you will please consider as embodying my sentiments in that case.

Yours truly,

JARVIS B. BUXTON.

EXTRACT.

"I shall add one rule which we may well suppose comprised in the inspired precept we treat on, (see Heb. 13th ch. 17th v.,) which is, that, at least, we forbear openly to dissent from our guides or to contradict their doctrine; except only, if it be not so false as to subvert the foundations of faith or practice of holiness. If we cannot be internally convinced by their discourses; if their authority cannot sway with us against the prevalence of other reasons, yet we may spare outwardly to oppose them or to slight their judgment; for doing this doth tend, as to the disgrace of their persons, so to the disparagement of their office; to an obstructing the efficacy of their ministry; to the infringement of order and peace in the Church: For when the inconsiderate people shall see their teachers distrusted and disrespected; when they perceive their doctrine may be challenged and opposed by plausible discourse; then will they hardly trust them or comply with them in matters most certain and necessary; than which disposition in the people there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or baneful to the Church."

P. S. You must not be too much surprised at the publication to which you allude. "Nothing is more common," says Bishop Sherlock, "than for some men to be run away with by their abilities; nor do they reflect how dangerous a snare is it to a man to imagine that he can prove or confute any thing at pleasure."

J. B. B.

To ———, Esquire.





## AN APPENDIX

TO THE DOCUMENTS PRINTED BY THE VESTRY, CONNECTED WITH  
THE RESIGNATION OF THE RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH.

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### I.

RALEIGH, August 22, 1840.

IN the report of the Committee adopted by the Vestry, reference is made (p. 4 & 5 of the Pamphlet) to St. Paul's decision concerning the lawfulness of joining in the feasts which followed the idolatrous sacrifices of the Heathen. That reference, it is thought, might, with propriety have been extended so as to take in the *whole* of the Apostle's doctrine upon the subject.

When this question occurred, the Apostle was careful to "point out the importance of example, and the danger of countenancing the appearance of evil. It is true, he argues, the matter is indifferent in itself." "Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; neither if we eat not, are we the worse. But *take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling-block to them that are weak.* For if any man see thee which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols: *and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?* But, *when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.* Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, *I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.*"

Here the Apostle furnishes a *rule*, which, much as the particular circumstances under which it was laid down differ from those in which we are placed, may be regarded as a general one, "of universal application as to the *spirit* which influences the *true Christian.*" It is a rule too, which is easily comprehended and applied by the most simple and ignorant; and the conscientious observance of it will go very far to prevent any such practical difference

of sentiment between Minister and People, as that which had led to the publication of the Vestry's Pamphlet and this Appendix.

## II.

What was said in the foregoing section respecting the reference to St. Paul's teaching, may also be applied to the use made in the report (p. 4, 5, & 6,) of the language of another. The quotations here alluded to, though the authority is not given, it is well known, are from a work (of the present Bishop of Chester, in England, the Rt. Rev. JOHN BIRD SUMNER,) entitled "Apostolical Preaching considered," and from the 8th chapter of that work, which treats of "Intercourse with the World." These passages, whether intended in the report to be used as authority, or only employed as expressing accurately the views of the Vestry, certainly do not fairly represent the opinions and teachings of the author, upon the subject of the inconsistency of "worldly amusements" with the Christian character and profession. This, the following extracts from the same work and from *the very same chapter*, it is thought will abundantly show.

1. "If we look to the present age, which is our more immediate concern, it certainly cannot be pretended that there is no opposition existing, and therefore none to be dreaded, between the world and Christianity. This opposition must be equivocally acknowledged, till the precepts of the Gospel are universally received as law by which the morality of actions is to be estimated, and till the corrupt passions cease to become "a law unto themselves," with the connivance or consent of mankind. As long as sins of impurity, such as are declared by the Gospel to exclude from any "inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven," are passed over with complacency by society, unless attended with very gross aggravations; *as long as a life spent in a course of uselessness, frivolity and vanity is considered as an innocent employment of the talents, time, fortunes and understanding committed to our improvement*; as long as a practice like that of duelling, which must either involve the risk of suicide or murder, is not only deemed venial but honorable; *so long, at least, conformity with the world is enmity with God*; so long the Christian is called upon *to choose* which he will serve, *the world or Christ*; as long as those who profess the



law of the Gospel, shall acknowledge a law which *opposes* it, so long must the true followers of Christ form *a world within a world.*" (p. 154, 155.)

2. "Till the Christian and the man of the world more nearly agree, the distinction between the *visible* and *invisible* Church, will be unhappily too just, and *the difference must be clearly marked out* between those who suffer "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches to choke the word," and those on the other hand who "receive it into good ground, and bring forth fruit, thirty, or sixty, or an hundred fold." (p. 156, 157.)

3. "The result of the difference is, that *a constant opposition exists between the two contending principles of the world and the Gospel*; and its effects upon the Christian is to involve him *in a perpetual conflict*, not only with his own inward corruption, *but with the world around him*, which disguises the aspect of things, and represents what is *honorable* in the sight of *men*, as *innocent* in the sight of *God*. Amid the confusion of right and wrong, which arises from a nominal conformity to the Gospel, and a practical deviation from it, it is no easy task to discern the precise line to which compliance may go, and where it must be resolutely withheld. Christians, therefore, are to be warned, that *Satan is the prince of that world* in which they are placed to walk for a time, and in which their business and their thoughts are necessarily engaged, so that *it is not to be considered as a friendly country*, where they may throw aside caution, indulge repose, or sit down in security, but *is an enemy's land and abounds with dangers.*" (p. 157.)

4. "How difficult is it to maintain an intercourse with the world, without allowing temporal motives to sway our pursuits and actions, instead of those which the Gospel sets before us; and since the honorable exertion of mental talents ensures general applause and reputation, how easily are we seduced to employ them for this object, in a manner which does not forward piety, and shows little consideration of the honor of the giver! *The most usual and successful bait, however, which the world holds out, is pleasure.*" (p. 158.)

5. "There must, undoubtedly, be no sinful compromise, no conformity with practices unworthy our profession, because they are commonly admitted by the world,

for the sake of any eventual good which might be hoped from such connivance. *The advantage is doubtful ; the evil certain.*" (p. 161.)

6. "If" the Minister "takes his stand on the ground of *inexpediency*, he has certainly *much* to argue ; for *there can be no doubt* that public assemblages and diversions *have a strong tendency to withdraw the mind from things above to things below ; that the common routine of society is generally a waste of time, if not of something still more valuable ;* and that IT IS RARE INDEED TO FIND A PERSON ADDICTED TO THESE COMPLIANCES WITH THE WORLD, WHO DOES NOT CONFINE HIS VIEWS OF RELIGION TO A VERY LOW AND INSUFFICIENT STANDARD." (p. 162.)

7. "There is a truth, an universal truth, which must neither be withheld nor disguised ; that the world, even the nominally Christian world, *has objects which are not Christian ;* that it offers many pursuits which are inconsistent with the Gospel, and *many more which are hindrances in the way of real faith ; that it tempts with pleasures which indispose to piety, and are adverse to the love of God.* Into these dangers the mind will infallibly be led, and swerve towards these objects, unless it is habitually referred to an example more spiritual, and a standard more exalted, than the general practice of mankind exhibits. With this view, let the preacher lay before his congregation the practical parts of the epistles. What the *letter* of the law may have left unrevealed, its *spirit* will supply. It will soon appear that the presiding faith, the fervent love of God and of heavenly things, the simple and humble mind, which the Apostles demand, are *incompatible* with the tumult of much intercourse with general society, and with the vanity and bustle of worldly pleasures. It will appear that the habitual relaxation of a Christian is not to be sought in amusements that weary where they ought to refresh, that ruffle the temper which they are intended to compose, and disturb those better affections of the heart, which it is most important to cherish ; but in the quiet charms of friendship, in the indulgence of domestic tenderness, in the pursuit of those elegant charms of literature and the arts which are not only harmless and unimpeachable, but chasten and adorn the mind. (p. 163.)

The foregoing extracts may be thought to be at variance



with the passages quoted in the paper of the Vestry. But it should be considered that the excellent author is addressing himself to *Clergymen*, and advising them as to the best and most Scriptural mode of preaching the Gospel and applying its doctrines and principles to the hearts and consciences of men. On this subject of worldly amusements, he is aiming, not so much to discuss the allowableness of them among Christians, as to lay down some general rules for the guidance of Ministers in their treatment of the question. He would not have the Minister oppose them on the untenable grounds, either that they are expressly forbidden by the author of our Holy Religion, or that they are wrong in themselves; but on that of their *inexpediency*, their *tendency*, their *incompatibility* with the growth and exercise of the Christian graces. On this ground, it is evident, from the extracts which have been given, that he himself is as decided in his opposition to the prevalence of worldly amusements among Christian people, as the Rector of Christ Church has shown himself to be. Indeed these extracts are believed to cover fully the ground taken by the Rector. He has *never*, he thinks, taught or held, that the practices on the part of the communicants of his charge to which he objects, are "expressly forbidden in Scripture" or that they are "wrong in themselves." The *inexpediency* of these things arising from their known tendency and influence, and their *incompatibility* with the exercise of "the presiding faith, the fervent love of God and of Heavenly things, the simple and humble mind, which the Apostles" and the whole tenor of the revealed word "demand"—*these* have ever been, substantially, the ground on which the Rector has taken his stand and raised his voice against the prevailing practice among the members of his Communion; and he might safely appeal to the body of his congregation, as well as to his written sermons, for proof that such is the fact. Surely no other ground is taken or implied in the paper submitted by him to the Vestry. He has maintained, as he there states, and he still feels it his duty to maintain, that "Communicants of the same Church" cannot indulge in the amusements of which he speaks, "*consistently with the solemn vows which are upon them, and their sacred character as 'Temples of the Holy Ghost,' as 'members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom*

of *Heaven* ;” but this is no more than to assert, with Bishop SUMNER, the *incompatibility* of “the presiding faith, the fervent love of God and Heavenly things, the simple and humble mind which the Apostles demand, *with the vanity and bustle of worldly pleasures.*” He has also declared, what, with deepened conviction, he now repeats, that it is his “honest and decided belief, that the practice” to which he objects “if persevered in, will be ultimately destructive of all vital religion in the congregation ;” but this is scarcely stronger language than that of the same excellent Bishop, when he says “there *can be no doubt* that public assemblages and diversions have *a strong tendency to withdraw the mind from things above to things below*”—and “it is rare indeed to find a person addicted to these compliances with the world, who does not *confine* his views of religion to a *very low and insufficient standard.*” Indeed the object of that paper was neither to criminate the Vestry and Congregation, nor to argue the question of the *lawfulness* of worldly amusements, as must be obvious to any impartial person ; there being neither any attempt at argumentation, nor so much as an *assertion* relative to that question. There is believed to be nothing in it inconsistent with the admission that, after all, the Vestry and Congregation *may be right* and the Rector *wrong* in opinion. Its sole object was to give a statement of the facts which had conducted the Rector to the conclusion that he could “no longer be substantially useful to the people of his charge,” and thus to show that he had not acted without reason, and capriciously.

### III.

The Vestry in their paper, (p. 5 & 6,) express regret that their minister should entertain views different from those of themselves and “a majority of the Congregation,” and do not hesitate to express the opinion that his are “*mistaken views.*” That his views are mistaken, is certainly *possible*—for he has never set up a claim to infallibility—but whether, had his views been exactly accordant with theirs upon the subject of the present difference, he would have been more highly respected and esteemed by them as a Minister of Jesus Christ, may well be questioned.



Be that as it may, he is happy in being able to show that *his* are not *peculiar* views, but are fully sanctioned and sustained by others who stand high in the Church—not only, as has been shown, by the distinguished Bishop of Chester, but by his own respected Diocesan, Bishop Ives, by the late eminent and pious Bishop of Limerick, and by the devoted and influential Layman of the Church, who is Editor of the “Banner of the Cross.” To these a host of other names, both of fathers and sons in the Church might be added, but it is not necessary. The Rector of Christ Church may well be content with the countenance and support given to his “views” in the documents which follow.

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LETTER FROM BISHOP IVES TO THE EDITOR OF THE  
RALEIGH REGISTER.

RALEIGH, FEB. 8, 1840.

*My Dear Sir:* I have observed, with great pleasure, that a column or two of your valuable paper, in its much if improved form, is devoted to the cause of sound Morality and Religion. Whatever may be the differences of opinion among Christian men on the subject of what is called ‘Worldly Amusements,’ I cannot doubt that all who have heard the name of the good Bishop of Limerick—a name associated with whatever is holy in life, and wise in counsel—will be glad to know, and ready to defer to his views on the subject; a subject, which, whatever may be thought of it, must be confessed by all, to be one of deep and essential interest to the present and eternal welfare of the redeemed, but erring creatures of God. You will, therefore, confer a favor, I doubt not, on many of your Subscribers, by giving a place in your columns to the accompanying letter of Bishop JEBB, prefaced by the Editor of the “Banner,” who is an active and justly influential Layman of the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. With high respect, your friend and servant,

L. S. IVES.

[FROM THE "BANNER OF THE CROSS."]  
WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.

We have inserted among the selections of the present number, an extract from a letter written by Mr., afterwards Bishop, Jebb, some thirty years ago, to a young Irish clergyman, on the subject of worldly amusements, and beg leave to recommend it to the attentive perusal of all our readers, both clerical and lay. *There is too near an approximation among Christians to the customs of the world, and with many, the dividing line is profession only.* They manifest the same eager pursuit of wealth and pleasure, the same devotion to fashion, and the same selfishness and luxurious indulgence as those who have taken no religious vows upon them; and, as we lately observed, *do more by their pernicious example to retard the progress of the Gospel, than all the opposition of its avowed enemies has ever been able to accomplish.* The responsibility of such unworthy professors is a fearful one, for not only is their own end "destruction," but they involve others also in their ruin; and the delinquency is sufficiently general to make it a matter of personal concernment with every individual to appropriate to himself the interrogatory of the sorrowing disciples, "LORD is it I?" and seek the solution, where alone it can be found, in the revelation, which he has given us of our duty. Clergymen, says Bishop Jebb, in another part of his letter, "should be cautious even to jealousy that they lose not their vantage ground; that they swerve not an inch from their peculiar and appropriate calling. 'Ye are the light of the world' said our blessed LORD, 'but if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness.' \* \* \* In matters decidedly indifferent, it is indeed right that we should conform to the usages of civilized life. Good sense and Christian charity require this at our hands. Thus we may please our brethern for their good to edification; and of this judicious and amiable conformity we have an exquisite model in Him who is as our great example. *But whenever conscience and religion are concerned, as they essentially are in this point of amusements, our line of duty is clear and unequivocal: 'Come out from among them—be ye separate,' is the language of Scripture, of conscience, of feeling, and of all*



that is spiritual within us. I will only add, that the case of all who stifle this voice is singularly awful."

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LETTER FROM BISHOP JEBB TO A CLERGYMAN.

*My Dear Sir* : It has given me deep concern that you were at Mrs. ———'s ball. I had indulged expectations, too sanguine, as the event proves, that you possessed sufficient steadiness and resolution to act upon what I know must be your inward conviction respecting the common amusements of the world. The utter incompatibility of such tumultuous gaieties, with Christian seriousness, you should be at least as well aware of, as I can possibly be. For such scenes you have no relish ; they must be to you as a strange and unnatural element. Why then should you sanction them by your presence ? Why should you thus do violence to your principles and your feelings ? And why thus contradict by your practice, without even the shadow of rational inducement, the general tenor of your doctrine from the pulpit ?

Perhaps, my dear Sir, you have never distinctly adverted to the fact, that what constituted the essential guilt of idolatry, in the early periods of the world, is fully implied in attachment to the amusements of the present day. The grossest idolatry did not more effectually defraud the one true God of the worship that was due to Him, as a providential and moral governor, than attachment to such amusements precludes devotedness to heart to the same gracious Being, as the source and centre of all true happiness. This will appear upon very brief consideration. That natural thirst after some undefined good, that irksomeness of life, that craving void of soul, under which half the world is laboring, are all so many indications, that something is wanting which the world cannot give ; are all kindly meant to impel us to the blessed fountain of goodness, of enjoyment, of full and complete bliss. On the other hand, can it be doubted, that diversions are the chief engines of a diabolical counter-scheme, by which people are enabled, at least for a time, to get rid of themselves ; and are thus kept from earnestly and devotedly betaking themselves to God, as their light, their life, and the very joy of their heart ? Now if these things be so, it inevitably follows, that *common amusements contain*

*the very essence of spiritual idolatry ; and for my own part, I have no doubt that the great enemy can hardly be more deeply gratified, or the interests of his dark kingdom more essentially promoted, than when souls capable of God, are seduced to prop up " a frail and feverish being " by those wretched shifts and expedients, which are miscalled the innocent pleasures of life.*

Observe, that I presume not in this matter, to judge the mass of society. Before a far different tribunal it must stand or fall. Great multitudes unquestionably err through ignorance ; and as God mercifully winked at the gross idolatry of the Gentiles, it is highly probable that he now winks at the subtler idolatry of mere professing, or of imperfectly informed, Christians. It is however a most instructive fact, that against the idolatry of His own people—of those who had been taught to know, and trained to adore Him—His denunciations and indications were tremendously severe. A most instructive fact ; for it follows, by inevitable consequence, that they who have been brought within the higher influences of Christianity, cannot, without deep criminality, and extreme hazard, break down the barriers between themselves and the world ; or in any degree countenance a system which goes to shut out God from the heart.

What estimate the sacred writers formed of such enjoyments as the world delights in, it is needless for me to state. Let me barely direct your attention to that passage of Isaiah : " The harp and the viol, and the tabor and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts ; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands ; " and that other of Amos, " they chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, " &c. The sequel is doubtless familiar to your mind, and it is awfully decisive.

How different the picture given by the last of the prophets in that lovely passage, where he describes the intercourse of good men, in times of public calamity—in times not unlike the present ! " Then they that feared God spake often to one another ; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought of his name ; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels. " It would be



trifling with a serious subject to ask, is this the manner of communication that prevails in scenes of tumultuous gaiety? But it may be fairly inquired, would not such conversation be incompatible with the whole scope and character of these assemblages? Nay, would it not, amidst such concomitants, be justly accounted at once ridiculous and profane? *Can a Christian then* (I use the term in the highest and only adequate sense)—*can a Christian consistently and conscientiously frequent meetings which by their very nature exclude those topics which should be habitually present with us; and of which we are not only to think, but also to speak, “when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way; when we lie down, and when we rise up?”*

Thus far I have merely considered the case of any serious Christian. But how transcendent is the obligation, how solemn the responsibility of a Christian teacher! When our Lord in his divine sermon, exhorts his followers to “enter in at the straight gate,” he immediately subjoins this most significant warning: “Beware of false prophets:” intimating what the experience of eighteen centuries has but too abundantly confirmed, that the most effectual obstacles in the way of strict religion, and the most dangerous seductives would be furnished by the erroneous doctrine and example of religious instructors. The “wide gate, and the broad way,” may be fairly taken to signify the way of the world. And since it is notorious that tumultuous gaieties constitute the chief occupation of this frequented road, and are the great allurements which induce multitudes to choose it, what can be more emphatically the duty of a Christian Minister, than to bear testimony, at least by his own undeviating example, against such anti-spiritual pursuits! Or how can he more fatally betray the holy cause, which he has been solemnly set apart to defend, than by a weak and dastardly compliance with the ruinous practices of the world? I use strong language: I can employ no other to do common justice to what I feel. And I am conscious that my words fall infinitely short to the mischief which they attempt to describe. If a clergyman were to commit some flagitious enormity; if he were to forge a bank note, or to rob on the highway, the act, though more atrocious, would be far less prejudicial to the cause of true religion; for he would



not then be "*Exemplar vitiis imitabile*." His conduct would be reprobated; his character would be stigmatized; his life would be forfeited to the laws of his country, but Christianity would remain uninjured and unblenched. On the other hand, it should be deeply laid to heart, that the more innocent, the more edifying, the more exemplary a Minister is, in all other respects, the more deadly will be his example, if he should unhappily give countenance to the pleasure-seeking propensities of the world. The thorough-paced votary of amusement would give little for the testimony of half a score buck parsons; but a sober, serious clergyman is felt to be an invaluable acquisition. He will be triumphantly quoted, as a model of unstarched, uncanting, unfanatical religion. His very virtues will be pressed into the service of vice; his piety itself will, by an ingenious, but not unusual artifice, be employed to raise recruits for the next campaign of pleasure, and to swell the muster-roll of dissipation. I do by no means speak at random; these things I have seen and heard. I myself have been assailed with arguments drawn from the example of clergymen "who were at once good and pleasant; whose zeal and charity were exemplary, and yet they did not scruple to promote the innocent gaieties of life;" and well do I know, that such specious examples have decided many a wavering heart to choose this world for its portion. This, indeed, is perfectly natural. Suppose an amiable and religiously disposed person, for the first time in her life, introduced into a ball-room: "half pleased and half afraid;" hesitating between God and the world; now, resolving to withdraw from those vanities which at her baptism she promised to renounce; now tempted to mingle with the crowd, and to do like other people. Suppose that, at this critical moment of suspense, she should spy out in the giddy throng, a clergyman; a respectable clergyman; a man beloved for his virtues, and revered for his piety;—would not this be decisive, would it not fatally turn the balance? I must soberly pronounce, that in such circumstances, the weight of such an example would be next to irresistible; and it is easier to imagine than to state, how tremendous may be the consequences in this life, and in that which is to come.